RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 26th August, 1987/
4 Bhadra, 1909 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock. The **Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Vayudoot services in Andhra Pradesh

*421. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of the districts which are covered by Vayudoot services in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether any Vayudoot services in that state have been discontinued in the recent past;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether there is any plan to introduce Vayudoot services for all the districts in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) Vayudoot had airlinked the following stations in the State of Andhra Pradesh:—

1. Hyderabad
2. Cuddapah
3. Rajahmundry
4. Vishakhapatnam
5. Tirupathi
6. Vijayawada
7. Ramagundam
8. Warrangal

Vayudoot is presently operating services to Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, Vishakhapatnam, Tirupathi and Vijayawada. Its services to Cuddapah and Ramagundam have been discontinued as the runways there required resurfacing. Because of non-availability of Ramagundam, service to Warrangal from Hyderabad became uneconomical and was withdrawn.

(d) No, Madam.

SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Madam, in reply to part (d) of my question, the hon. Minister said 'No'. I would like to know, what are the reasons for not introducing Vayudoot services to all the district headquarers in Andhra pradesh. Why the Ramagundam and Cuddapah runways are not being resurfaced?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: The other districts do not have runways. In regard to these two stations, I have already said that the runways need repairing. We have already started the work and as soon as it is completed we will start the services.

SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: I would like to know whether there is any proposal with the Government to introduce Vayudoot services to piligrim and tourist centres like Nagarjunasagar and other places in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Wherever airports exist and are operational where planes can land and taking into account the traffic potential and availability of aircraft, we would like to start the services.

SHRIMATI MANORAMA PANDEY: I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria for connecting places by Vayudoot and how much profit has been earned by Vayudoot in 1986-87.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Madam, there are certain criteria which we have adopted for airlinking various places by Vayudoot. There are about seven criteria. These are: economic viability, geographical terrain, tourist and industrial potential of the place, availabilities of infrastructural facilities potential of feed services in major routes, affinity of new stations with the base and other stations on the route and utilisation of aircraft capacity. As far as the profitability is concerned, I do not have the figure just now. I will give it later on.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Madam, Vayudoot is being proclaimed as the fastest growing airline. But we have been repeatedly raising questions in

Parliament that there are any number of engine failures etc. on the Vayudoot services. The question about the treatment meted out to the pilots has also been raised. Various complaints have been made in the House. Now, the General Manager has been promoted as Managing Director. I am not complaining about his promotion. But I would like to ask specifically about Andhra Pradesh and the various places which have been tied up with Vayudoot. You have started various services and you say that it will be five times a week, six times a week and so on. I Would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the average in respect of these five places which you are operating in Andhra Pradesh. Are you keeping to the schedule? If you say, to Hyderabad, it is five times a week or to Cuddapah and Vijayawada it is five times a week, are you keeping to the schedule? Or, are you forced to cut down the service because of shortage of aircraft? I know of Dehradun where the daily service of Vayudoot is there but it is not going for the last two days. So on the one hand we have shortage of aircraft. The aircraft are being overworked to the extent of 30 per cent. There have been so many engine failures also. So, why are you expanding the Vayudoot service at such a fast rate? Why are you not consolidating? Why not have it at fewer places and stick to the schedule? Why are you trying to become the world's fastest growing airline?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Whatever is the available capacity of the aircraft, we are utilising it. Maximum utilization of the aircraft is there. No airlines, leave alone Vayudoot, would like to start operating on certain routes and then discontinue the service. If it is on technical grounds or due to such other reasons, it is a different thing. As a pilot, you may be able to understand it more than many of us. We are able to maintain the schedule up to 90 per cent all over the country except the North-East region where because of terrain, because of weather, floods and so many other reasons we may not be able to keep to our schedule but as far as the rest of the country is concerned, 90 per cent we are keeping to the schedule. Now it is possible that there are certain stations where the service is discontinued after plying That is only because some of them are seasonal stations like Agra, and five to six other stations are there. I can give you the names, but nowhere we would like purposefully to start a flight on a particular route and then discontinue it.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Keep a check on that.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA alias V. ARUNACHALAM: Linking of as many cities as possible with the introduction of Vayudoot service is quite important. Of course remarkable service is rendered by our Government. We have repeatedly been asking to introduce a Vayudoot service between Madurai and Mayiladuturai. The runway is also available. Despite our repeated requests and assurances given by the Central Government on several occasions, this has not been done. I would like to know when that service will be introduced between Madurai and Mayiladuturai.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Madam, I cannot say today when we will do it but we will look into it, look into the capacity and the availability of the aircraft and the load factor. We would surely like to start it as quickly as possible.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: I would like to know whether we have the plans to extend the Vayudoot service, as suggested by my hon. colleague, to the main stations on all districts. I take it that this is the intention. Now, in order to fulfil this intention, does he propose to buy new aircraft, better aircraft which are more reliable, which can keep to the schedule? Part (b) of my question is about the air taxi service. How is this service going to compete with the Vayudoot service, how is this service going to be coordi-

nated? This is the other type of service which the Minister has taken up.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: First of all, choosing of aircraft depends on the Evaluation Committee. After evaluating different kinds of aircraft, whatever the Planning Commission has allowed us, we will surely like to go in for that aircraft. We are also, looking for countries who can supply us aircraft on rupee payment. I can tell you the response which we have got from some of the western countries. Each one of them has shown willingness to supply the aircraft on rupee payment; what comes out after discussion is a different thing. This response they have shown and choosing of the aircraft depends on the decision of the Evaluation Committee and also various other factors. What was the second part of your question? Yes, about air taxi service. It has still not been cleared by the Cabinet. This is for the NRIs. Air taxi service which has been cleared is by aircraft which are registered in the country and also aircraft which are manufactured in the country with a 19 seater capacity. They can apply for a licence to the DGCA and there are set rules and regulations. Norms have been set and on the basis of those norms, air taxi service will be alllowed to operate. We will make sure that the interests of the Indian Airlines and Vayudoot are kept in mind.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Madam, the Minister has said that there is no proposal to introduce any new routes in Andhra Pradesh since there are no runways, as if runways are the only thing required for introducing new routes for Vayudoot. On the contrary, the Minister also says that Warangal route has been discontinued since it is not economical, which means there are other conditions also. I would like to know from the Minister whether any survey has been ordered by the Government, or is under consideration of the Government, about the feasibility of introducing new routes in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Looking at the capacity available and the availability of the aircraft in a particular region, we do look into all this. I just said when the hon. Member had asked about the criteria for a new station to be started that those eight particular reasons must be there for starting a new station and if it fulfils those eight conditions and aircraft capacity is available subject to the load factor, we would like to start it.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: What is the present position? Is any survey being done or is yet to commence?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Wherever aircraft capacity is available, Vayudoot is continuously surveying. They do not want to have their aircraft stationed on the ground.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Madam, he has not answered my specific question whether any survey is going on to introduce new routes.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I said that this is a continuous process. Not only this, if the aircraft capacity is available and enough load factor is there, we would like surely to start. As for your asking the question whether any survey has been taken up. I said that this is a continuous process. All the time, the Vayudoot people stationed in the different regions of the country are always surveying the seat capacity as well as the load factor in a particular region. So the survey is always there.

SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Madam, this is no answer. He is giving a general answer.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has answered it. He has said that a continuous survey is being undertaken.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: May I know from the hon. Minister how the Vayudoot service, particularly in Maharashtra State is faring and how many stations have been connected by

it? Is there any specific proposal for Kolhapur which is not being connected by the Indian Airlines even though the aerodrome has been constructed there very recently, because Belgaun and Poona have got services. I would like to know whether the Minister will categorically state that either Kolhapur will be connected by Vayudoot service, or a regular Indian Airlines service will be introduced on its way from Bombay-Poona-Belgaun or Belgaun-Bomay-Poona.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Madam, I cannot answer this question straightway. I could inform the hon. Member. I will have to find out. I do not have it.

SHRI A. G. KULGARNI: Will you have a Vayudoot service at least for Kolhapur?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: My answer is again the same—availability of capacity and aircraft. If the aircraft is there, I would surely like to start.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: In Andhra Pradesh you star ten. In Maharashtra you do not want even one. Is this the way of replying?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Since we are discussing Andhra Pradesh as a State and also considering the economic viability of pressing Vayudoot into service besides, of course, other factors like runway availability etc.

They must consider Kothagudem which is the centre for the Singareni Collieries. There is a ferro-alloy plant and a sponge iron plant and it is a fast-advancing, industrially progressive, area.

(Interruptions)

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Why in Andhra only? First let him have it at Kolhapur.

AN HON. MEMBER: The question is about Andhra Pradesh.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Madam, I am not replying to him; I am sticking to the subject. So, would the Minister consider .... (Interruptions)....Because when you see that there is so much industrialization and there are no facilities other than...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You put your supplementary.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: This is the supplementary, Madam. . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are explaining why it should be there.

(Interruptions) . .

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Let me complete, Madam. What I request this, since he wants economic viability, then there has to be a survey conducted of the area. So, have they conducted it? My reference is to Kothagudem because there is a concentration of so many industries there and it is expanding. So, would the Minister consider having a Vayudoot airport there? Also, I am not very selfish to talk only about my own State. On the border-line there is Orissa and between Orissa and Andhra Pradesh there is very little difference. In Orissa, there is Rayagada. Rayagada has an airstrip.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are making a speech now.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: This is not a speech, Madam. I want to tell the Minister that in Orissa there is an airstrip already existing.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Within two minutes you have to finish. You have already taken three minutes. Please put your supplementary.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I am putting it, Madam. If I don't explain the parameters, how is the Minister going to answer?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There are other Members also. What is your question?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: My question is that there is a—Madam, I am repeating it for the fourth time.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please don't repeat.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Because you are not permitting me..

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Because you are not putting the question. You are just going on explaining it.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: In Orissa, already there is an airstrip existing.. .(Interruptions) ... What is this interruption?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are not asking the question.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I am telling you, there is an airstrip which is already existing. Will the honourable Minister consider that as an economic viability to have a Vayudoot service there?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is right now: You have asked the question. Now please sit down .. .. (Interruptions).. ..

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I will find out the feasibility of this particular proposal. I would like to take this opportunity to answer Mr. Kulkarni's question also, that in the Seventh Five Year Plan Kolhapur is one of the airports to be connected by Vayudoot.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Veena Verma—another lady, from this side.

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा : उपसभापति महोदया, जैसे कि मन्त्री जी ने कहा है कि जहां-जहां एअरपोर्ट सुविधाएं हैं वहां पर वायुदूत सेवा बढ़ाई जा रही हैं। मध्य प्रदेश में बिलासपुर में तीन-चार साल पहले एक एअरपोर्ट बनाया गया। वहां से प्राइवेट फ्लाइट्स जाती हैं लेकिन वहां अभी तक कोई वायुदूत सेवा या किसी अन्य सर्विस का कोई प्रावधान नहीं है। मैं यह पूछना चाहती हूं कि वहां से वायुदूत सेवा कब तक शुरु हो जाएगी ?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Madam two airports in Madhya Pradesh, Jagdalpur and Bilaspur, are under repair—the runways are under repair—and as soon as the runways are repaired, we will find out——(Interruptions) —— It can't take too much time.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Madam, instead of having more Vaydoot services.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief: two minutes only..... (Interruptions)—— tI is because you take more time. What can I do? (Interruptions)....

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Madam, instead of having more Vayudoot services, especially in Andhra Pradesh—I am sorry to know from the Minister—some of the Vayudoot services have been discontinued due to the bad condition of runways I would like to know from the Minister whether there is any time-bound programme to repair these runways so that the discontinued Vayudoot services are resumed early. As my colleagues have also said, some of the districts which are remote from the cities and which are not accessible by train or car, such as Adilabad district and even the most important district, Mahaboobnagar district, are facing difficulties.

These districts, apart from Kothagudem, need Vayudoot services. I would like to know from the Minister whether any survey or any plan has been made to have these services in these districts.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: First of all, Sir, looking at the financial position of the National Airports Authority because that is an important thing,

what we have been doing is that we have been requesting the Chief Ministers of different States wherever requests come from the Members of Parliament or the chambers of commerce or other organisations that they would like the Vayudoot services or other services should start, and the Chief Ministers have been very positive in their approach. I think, through you, I would also like to request the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh even to repair the runway for us and charge us for it without interest so that we will be able to pay it back in times to come. That way we will be able to do both these things— have the airports ready and have the services started.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Our State is suffering from drought. We require crores of rupees to meet the drought situation.

SHRI SHANKARRAO NARAYANRAO DESHMUKH: When the airstripts and the runways are available, then the Vayudoot service may be started. In fact, in Maharashtra at Ozar there is already an airstrip and availability of space already existing, where the MIG planes take off and land. At Nasik Road there is an airstrip ready, runway is ready. Therefore, my suggestion is that the Government should consider to start the Vayudoot services at these two places without any delay.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I cannot answer that straightway, but we will consider that.

PROF. B. RAMCHANDRA RAO: Madam, the Minister has replied that he has appealed to the Chief Ministers to take up repair work etc. I would like to know whether he has written to the Chief Minister asking whether, when new airports are opened, new services are opened, they will meet a part of the cost so that you can have more facilities available.

In this connection, I may say that for the Visakhapatnam Airport at one time a part of the expenses was subsidised by the State Government. I may remind the Minister that it is not a new thing.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I will surely like to make a request. Madam, I would like to make a request. My first question has taken only half an hour.

Installation of Sontrak Alarm System in National Gallery of Modern Art

*422. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that electronic security decvice-Sontrak Alarm System was got installed in the National Gallky of Modern Art in 1984 at a cost of about Rs. 3.5 lakhs and selection of this particular system, out of other options available, was made without obtaining the advice of the Department of Electronics even thought this was the first order securred by the Firm and dependency of the system had not been tested by any other organisation so far;

(b) whether it is a fact that payment of about Rs. 1.25 lakhs was released to the firm when its installation had reached just half-way and that payment of another Rs. 2 lakhs was made without properly putting the system on trial;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the system aimed to provide security cover to the priceless and rare art objects has not worked as a perfect instrument even for 2 days since its installation; and

(d) if so, whether Government have made any inquiry into the matter to fix the responsibility for the deal and if so, what is the outcome thereof stating the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FA-